



# t|Dal shift

*Explorations of identity in contemporary Caymanian art*

10 September until 5 November, 2015.

**The National Gallery of the Cayman Islands**

## Thanks and Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the generous sponsorship of Butterfield, long-term supporters of the National Gallery, for making this exhibition possible.

Additional thanks are extended to the Ministry of Home Affairs, Health and Culture for their ongoing operational support; members of the voluntary National Gallery Exhibitions Committee for reviewing original submissions; Eme Paschalides; Justin Uzzell (photography); Martin McKoy (installation); Quick Images (catalogue and exhibition graphics); and to all of the artists who submitted work for consideration.



Butterfield



NATIONAL  
GALLERY  
CAYMAN ISLANDS

Cover image: The Swan  
(2014) by Pippa Ridley.  
Gouache and collage on  
board.

## Curator's Foreword

This exhibition was inspired by a reflection on the title of Paul Gauguin's painting *Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?* (1897). Created during a time of great personal crisis, the allegorical work depicts three stages of life in which themes of identity and purpose are explored. Gauguin considered it his masterpiece; a summary of the questions he had wrestled with throughout his life.

These questions seem as pertinent to our current condition as they were to the French artist over a century ago. The Cayman Islands are in a state of flux. The rapid socio-economic advances that have transformed our islands from maritime society to financial mecca in less than fifty years have had enormous repercussions on our wider culture, its expressions and material testimony. It is not surprising that much of our community is grappling with the notion of what it means to be 'of' Cayman in 2015, and questioning what the future might look like.

The 23 artists featured in this exhibition were invited to consider these questions and to explore the impact

that this change has had on their sense of self, and on the wider concepts of national identity, through a series of personal and social narratives. Some create from a deeply introspective viewpoint via memory, family, language and personal mythology, while others address the wider, often highly contested, notions of immigration, political status, ethnicity and race, rights of citizenship, urban development and erosion of tradition. Executed in a wide range of media, their work is a vehicle through which to challenge existing borders and begin articulating new meanings for contemporary Caymanian identity.

It has been a pleasure to work with many of our established artists on this exhibition and well as the nine artists who are exhibiting at the National Gallery for the first time: Shane Aquart, Wray Banker, David Bridgeman, Matt Brown, Randy Chollette, Aston Ebanks, Davin Ebanks, Kerwin Ebanks, Meegan Ebanks, Sean Ebanks, Kaitlyn Elphinstone, Frank E. Flowers, Jamie Hahn, Ben Hudson, Greg Lipton, Elena McDonough, Pippa Ridley, Judy Singh, Gordon Solomon, Nasaria Suckoo, Simon Tatum and Elina Zavala.

**Natalie Urquhart**

# The 'Natives'

SHANE AQUART

2014

Digital art and acrylic ink on canvas

50 x 50

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Like our patois, we are the result of various cultures merging. We are polyglot but certainly, and rightly so, with an African bent – yet we are not an African nation, says the artist. The ostensibly 'white' businessman of the title in fact hides a mixed heritage, his skin tone having been created from a mixture of white, black, Chinese and Indian. The artist suggests that the traditional concept of race has become invalid and that there is only one race – that of human. All differences in various people(s) are superficial. "We are all mixed," he says, "a hodgepodge of each others' blood, sweat and tears."

*About the artist...* Shane Aquart is a Jamaican born Caymanian artist, who signs his art 'Dready'. Dready is a unique graphic style influenced by the artist's Caribbean underpinnings, along with an itinerant life of English boarding school, Canadian high school and US college experiences – it is bright, colourful, whimsical and has a strong visual presence which makes it instantly recognisable.

Dready art has been featured across the Cayman Islands and the Caribbean region as well as at select venues in the US and UK.

## 'Our Way 1994-99'

WRAY BANKER

2015

Commercial signage with metal  
and electrical fixtures (fabricated by D'Signs)

48 x 48

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With this witty commercial readymade, the artist is reflecting on the power of branding, globalisation and the subsequent erosion of tradition. We are invited to contemplate the notion that turtle meat sandwiches might have remained central to our daily diet should commercial ventures in Cayman have taken a different turn. "When American fast foods chains were introduced to the island in the 1970s and 80s we almost ignored our traditional staples for the new, popularised 'take-outs'. Now, decades later, we are slowly realising how good we had it before Cayman was 'interrupted'," states Banker.

*About the artist...* Van Gogh and Picasso were big influences on Wray Banker in the early years. Later, his studies in Graphic Design (Houston, Texas) broadened his horizons and expanded his exposure to artists like Keith Haring and Andy Warhol, who inspired him to embrace the Neo-Pop movement. The title of Wray Banker's first solo exhibition, *Serious 'bout Makin Fun*, describes in a nutshell the artist's individual style and endeavour. Indeed, all of Banker's pieces to date are marked by an element of humour, which the artist feels is important to help people relate to his work. Most pieces satirise elements of life in the Caribbean, provoking us to see them in a new light.

Wray Banker has received critical acclaim as an artist, graphic designer and exhibition designer. Career highlights include designing the pins for the Cayman Islands 1996 Olympic Committee and the 2003 Pan Am Games (both voted 'Best of Countries'); designing brands for the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands (NGCI); the Cayman Islands National Museum (CINM); *The McCoy Prize*; and the *Native Sons* art collective.

As an artist and founding member of *Native Sons*, Wray Banker has exhibited extensively in the Cayman Islands and abroad, including *Art Miami* (2003); the *Santo Domingo Biennale* (2003); the Griffin Gallery, Chicago (2006); and the festival *Carifesta X* in Guyana (2008). Many of his works are in several significant public collections such as NGCI and CINM, as well as numerous local private collections.

Wray Banker has received several awards for his work including a Lifetime Achievement Award in Arts by the Cayman Islands Government (2003); *The McCoy Prize*: Second Commendation in Photography (2005); *The McCoy Prize*: Peoples Choice for Fine Art (2006); and Cayman National Cultural Foundation's *Artistic Achievement Award* (2007). The artist was recently recognised as an 'Emerging Pioneer' at the Cayman Islands' National Hero's Day (2014) for his "significant contribution to the promotion and preservation of Cayman's culture and heritage."

# If Anyone Knows Any Reason Why...

DAVID BRIDGEMAN

2007

Digital print on paper

94 x 40 & 35 x 23



The notion of identity is a constant in the work of David Bridgeman, who hails from the UK and has lived in the Caribbean for nearly 30 years. With no West Indian heritage, the artist shares his struggle to establish himself as an individual, but also as an artist, in a society that has strong roots to its past. "How much time should a person invest in a country to earn the right to a national identity?" he writes.

This work is a direct reference to the application process to obtain Caymanian status, a process which, at the time this work was created, required the applicant to publish his/her photo in the local newspaper to allow any Caymanian the opportunity to register their disapproval about the applicant's suitability with the Immigration Board.

To communicate his feelings about the process, the artist offers a typical two-part police mug shot of himself, holding his advertisement number on a placard like arrested persons are sometimes requested to hold with their name, date of birth and weight. Like in a police photo, the background is stark and simple to avoid distraction from the facial image and to help determine the identity of the individual, but instead of his height, the artist has drawn his timeline. The statement printed above the artist's photo was customary for every applicant in the immigration process. "We all looked like criminals in the photos," wrote the artist, "as if applying for the right of citizenship is a crime in itself."

*About the artist...* David Bridgeman was born in Oxford, England and moved to the Caribbean in 1987 to teach in various Government schools in the Cayman Islands.

His work has been influenced over the years by a number of artists; Bendel Hydes (Cayman Islands), James Isaiah Boodhoo (Trinidad), Karl 'Jerry' Craig (Jamaica) and Lys Hansen (Scotland) for painting; John Salvest (USA) for mixed media and installations; and Alfons Bytautas (Scotland) for printmaking.

As a British Caymanian his works have strong emotional ties to the landscape, both past and present, and contain images and symbols that bridge the gap between the Caribbean and his country of birth. He works in a variety of media to convey these feelings, which often involve an underlying social commentary about life on a small island.

David has exhibited throughout the Caribbean and in Canada and is a founding member of the art collective C4, an association of four individual Caymanian artists who share a common belief.

# The Source

RANDY CHOLLETTE

2015

Acrylic and mixed media on canvas

48 x 36



*"I have always been the anomaly, [...] the modern definition of a Caymanian"*

Randy Chollette

The exploration of identity can take the shape of a quest for the forming qualities that define the character of a person, a nation or a group. While harmony between body and soul is important, the title of this work invites us to contemplate what is left when the material and corporeal are gone. The artwork seeks to capture not only the physical elements and experiences that have shaped the artist's past and present 'self' – prodigal son, husband, father, artist, Rastafarian – but also, and most importantly, the ultimate defining nature of his spiritual connection. This exploration of spirit is a recurring theme in the artist's work.

*About the artist...* An intuitive, self-taught artist, Randy Chollette's vibrant work is often distinguishable by its signature style of Cloisonnism, or bold mosaic shapes outlined in black, as well as a strong Caribbean subject matter. Born and raised in the Cayman Islands, Chollette's homeland has inspired some of his best work and the artist moves confidently between realism and abstraction, weaving his Rastafarian beliefs into the style and theme of his paintings. Chollette has exhibited extensively in the Cayman Islands and abroad. His work can be found in the public collections of the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands, the Cayman National Cultural Foundation, the Cayman Islands National Museum, as well as in many private collections.

# Joni Mitchell Never Lies

ASTON EBANKS

2013

Recycled glass from car doors, left side, front and back. Digital print.

58 x 25



The legendary Canadian singer-songwriter and painter wrote these lyrics

*“Don't it always seem to go  
that you don't know what you've got  
'till it's gone they paved paradise  
and put up a parking lot...”*

[*Big Yellow Taxi*, 1970. Joni Mitchell]

after witnessing the extensive destruction of the natural environment by wide-scale development in Hawaii. By referencing them in his work, the artist draws a parallel with the challenges we also face in the Cayman Islands and explores the environment we live in as an expression of who we are.

The image – a beach that has succumbed to recent development – is presented as though seen from a car window. The artist is questioning our poor vision or inability to see and foresee: “things in the periphery rarely get noticed. Preferring fleeting glances to lasting embraces, our ‘someday’ has arrived and caught us unprepared. Now that the periphery has become our focus, what is now in our periphery? Unless we choose to ‘look’, comment, and act, our own paradise may disappear before we’ve noticed.”

*About the artist...* A self-taught conceptual artist, Jamaica-born Aston resides permanently in Grand Cayman with his family after stints in Switzerland and Western Samoa. He has become well-known for using recycled materials in his artwork with remarkable projects such as *The Maze*, a site installation constructed out of three thousand recycled wooden shipping pallets, and an ongoing permanent installation called *The Faley*, constructed out of recycled wood. His work has been featured in the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands (NGCI) with the exhibitions *Arekkly*, *Persistence of Memory* and *21st Century Cayman*, and has also entered the permanent collections of the NGCI and the Cayman Islands National Museum.

In addition to the above projects, Aston has worked extensively for the NGCI as an Outreach Art Instructor to creatively engage persons incarcerated at Her Majesty's (H.M.) Prison Northward and residents of Caribbean Heaven (the government funded drug rehabilitation centre).



## Redaction: 2015.15.04: Flux of Self

DAVIN K. EBANKS

2013

Glass, wood, aluminium sculptures

18 x 20 x 10

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The merging of two distinct art genres – Landscape and Portraiture – is a recurring theme in Davin’s work, which considers the landscape as the scene of our existence and therefore intimately connected to who we are. With the *Flux of Self* series, Davin Ebanks tries to see where he fits in his own landscape. Not contented with the already complex method of blowing and hand-sculpting glass, the artist works an overlay of various patterns to represent the layers of identity, sand-blasted until the final polish evokes the smooth texture of a membrane - a skin or a mask? The two replica heads develop further the mirroring process of duplication (which one is the copy?) and brings a raft of attendant post-modern notions of simulacrum, impersonation, counterfeit and forgery.

More tellingly perhaps, the patterns are not taken from the print of a human skin as one might expect but from the print of the Lionfish, an invasive species brought across oceans and continents by human beings themselves – a questioning allusion to which of the two species is really the invasive one. When magnified, the patterns of the fish, the sand over which it swims, and the hands the artists uses to catch the fish, become indistinguishable, serving to illustrate the connectivity between artist and environment.

*“I am the landscape; the landscape is me,”*

Davin K. Ebanks

The title *Flux of Self* is a reference to the Chinese geographer Yi Fu Tuan, who wrote that “place is security, space is freedom; we are attached to the one and long for the other.” (*Space and Place – The Perspective of Experience*, 1977). The artist implies that if someone’s place is in flux, the very notion of home is challenged; and when the notion of home is challenged, the notion of identity itself is shaken.

*About the artist...* Davin Ebanks is a sculptor whose current work primarily utilises the medium of glass to explore his personal and cultural history. Born on Grand Cayman in 1975, the artist spent his formative years on the water learning the lore of seafaring heritage from his grandfather.

He has a B.A. [1998] from Anderson University with a concentration in Graphic Design, and an M.F.A. [in 2010] from Kent State University, Ohio, with a concentration in glass sculpture.

Davin Ebanks has been an *Artist in Residence* at Jacksonville University (2001-2002) and at Kent State University (2012-2013). He has taught at the New York center for contemporary glass Urban Glass, at Salisbury University, Maryland, USA, and is currently Head of the Glass Department at Kent State University.

His work has been displayed at the Glass Art Society’s Annual Conference (US) and at invitational shows such as *2150° Fahrenheit*, an exhibition highlighting northeast Ohio’s sculptural glass artists; and *21st Century Glass*, a contemporary exhibition of glass sculpture at Salisbury University. He has been a recipient of *The McCoy Prize*—a national award from the Cayman Islands for excellence in the arts—and both his paintings and sculptural works are represented in the permanent collections of the Cayman Islands National Museum and the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands. His recent glass sculptures were on display at the invitational two-man show *Luminescent Forms: Art Under the Microscope* at The National Gallery of the Cayman Islands. In 2014 Davin Ebanks won a national competition for public art with his project *Adjacent*, a large-scale permanent glass and concrete sculpture, which now marks the entrance to the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands.

# Generations: How Caymanian Are You?

KERWIN G. EBANKS

2015

Mixed media on driftwood

6 x 46

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The rise of theoretical and political interest in citizenship has been shaped in important ways by a growing sensitivity to the concept of identity. Citizenship, conceived as a matrix of rights acquired with time, exists in tension with the passing of generations and the multiple identities or levels of 'Caymanian-ness' that arise there from. This tension is well expressed in this simple but effective interactive artwork where the viewer is invited to see how many pegs one can place into the rusted nail hoops to claim to a Caymanian lineage – an exercise which validates the concept of 'Caymanian-ness' while also and highlighting the numerous disparate identities now present in the Cayman Islands, of which Caymanian citizenship is but one.

*About the artist...* Kerwin G. Ebanks, studied Arts Education (BS) at University of Evansville, and only began pursuing painting seriously in May 2010, after several years of teaching. His style has since been defined by a repertoire of skills garnered from his general and personal studies, self-discovery and teaching art to his students. He is heavily influenced by the seascapes of the great American painter, Winslow Homer, and by the socially-engaged work of the prominent Mexican painter Diego Rivera (1886 – 1957) and the African-American painter Hale Woodruff (1900-1980).

The subject of his work is generally concerned with daily life in the Cayman Islands and its culture, lifestyles, attitudes, and heritage. These scenes draw heavily on the idealised archival images of Cayman past yet each is given a contemporary touch with references to the popular culture of today, making it at once historical and current.

# Human Abacus

MEEGAN EBANKS

2015

Poplar & oak wood, stainless steel, acrylic

46 x 61



If defining identity was a simple mathematical exercise, one could apply the counting function of an abacus to the human condition, and human beings would become mere beads subtracted, added or divided according to their social groups. In this interactive artwork viewers are invited to define these social groups, which could reach beyond the regular ones (race, culture, sexuality, gender, etc.) thus allowing the abacus to depict or invade most aspects of our life choices and circumstances.

The placement of the beads on each stratum is a meaningful act which contemplates the what, how, and why a particular placement is chosen. For some, placement is defined without question. For others, the division is not so black and white and the exercise opens a whole spectrum of possibilities, for which there is no simple formula. Ultimately the resolution to bridge the gap falls to each of us.

*About the artist...* Transitioning in 2005 from the 'city life' of Chicago to the 'island life' of Cayman, proved to be a formidable endurance test for American Meegan Ebanks. It took some time and marriage to a Caymanian for the artist to realise that instead of passively enduring Cayman, she wanted to embrace these islands actively and make them her permanent home.

Now a proud representative of the Cayman community, Meegan Ebanks feels a deep connection to this small rock of land in the Caribbean Sea. Time and life in Cayman has led her to understand that being a true artist is not about the volume of work she produces but about nurturing her creative ingenuity through a variety of media. Some days it is a poem or a piece of jewellery, on others a sculpture of wood or a work of clay.

# Neither Fish Nor Flesh

SEAN EBANKS

2015

Digital prints on paper

8 x 10 (x 4)



These photographs were captured during a series of short performances which simulated members of the community cutting the artist's hair; hair having great social significance for human beings, symbolising our social, cultural or religious identity. While initially setting out to illustrate the biased conservatism and intolerance he had experienced as a member of a counterculture, what he found during the process was something unexpected. He said of the experience, "I set out to capture the unease and prejudice that having this look brings but found just as much of the opposite. I wasn't prepared for my own, ingrained notions to surface in the face of the most unexpected stimuli: acceptance."

The question that lingers is 'How important is it to define who we are, and are we defined by ourselves or by others?'

*About the artist...* Sean Ebanks was born in Kingston in 1972 to Caymanian parents from East End and Cayman Brac .

He has spent the last two decades as a performing musician while occasionally dabbling in other art forms. While new to the creation of socially engaged artwork, he is proud to support local and transplanted artists region-wide. He has performed at the NGCI on several occasions but this is his first NGCI exhibition.

*"So remove the skin.  
Remove the songs from my lips.  
Remove the hair.  
Wash the sand from my toes.  
Can you see me?  
Can you name me?"*

Sean Ebanks

## White Plaits, Blue Braids

KAITLYN ELPHINSTONE

2015

Metallic Print & Installation

44 x 44



Braids have been made for thousands of years and for a variety of uses. By the same token, plastic bags can take hundreds of years to decompose. While several commentaries are narrated in the work –time, functionality, conservation and local practices from fishing to hairstyling – it is from its ethereal and ironic quality that the image draws its essential power: the artist magically turns an impurity into pure delicateness and light.

*About the artist...* Kaitlyn Elphinstone (b. 1985) is an interdisciplinary artist who works in digital media and assemblage, often with found objects. Having grown up in the Caribbean, her work explores the abundant and rich natural world of the Islands to comment on the relationship of man with his environment and encouraging conversations concerning its preservation.

Kaitlyn studied Visual Art and Art History at the University of Toronto and has a Masters Degree in Arts Policy and Management from the University of London (Birkbeck). She is a member of the contemporary artist collective 'C4' and has work in the Permanent Collection of the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands.

## Needlework Fruit

KAITLYN ELPHINSTONE

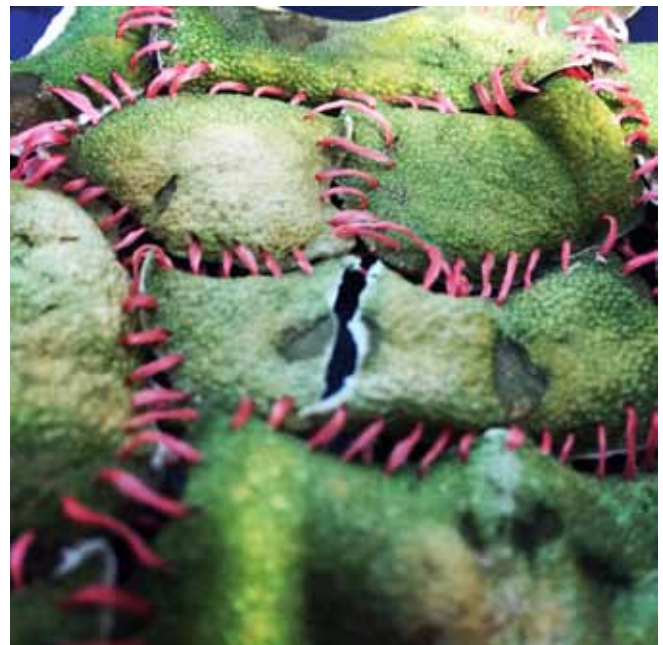
2015

Installation

dental floss and Caymanian limes

11 x 14

The image of Needlework Fruit records a real still-life installation of dental floss and Caymanian limes – a surprising association of elements which investigates the relationship between the man-made and the natural, and which draws interesting similarities between their qualities and their evocation. The theme of identity is intimately connected to the themes of temporality, femininity, functionality, materiality, and sustainability, which exude from this work. Ultimately the image is a documentation of our co-existence with the environment and our interconnectedness with our edible environment – a reference to the idea that all things are of a single underlying substance and reality.



# I See/ Eye See

FRANK E. FLOWERS

1997-2012

Standard & High Definition Video

(music by Jason "JG" Gilbert)



The staggering 100 hours of footage for this work span over 15 years of vacations spent by the artist with closest friends and family. It offers a compilation of interviews and images, most within a one-mile radius of the artist's childhood home. Initially filmed at random, the artist has revisited the footage to explore past, present and future Cayman and to ask 'where are we going?' Certainly this artwork takes us on a journey of contemplation and self-discovery, "from the old path of survival and necessity [...] to the promises of heroic escapades and the perils of tragedy." (Frank E. Flowers)

*Where We Been?* The first footage explores identity through the eyes of elderly Caymanians, their reverence for the olden days, strong community bonds, and clear ties to the sea.

*Where We Goin?* revisits the artist's youth, a pre – mobile phone Cayman of easy car loans and growing commercialism, where strong friendships were forged and driving was a central pastime. The video's leitmotiv of driving a vehicle also acts as a metaphor for navigating the direction one is heading in life.

*Where We Is?* calls for introspection, a reconnection to the past, to kin, to culture, and a questioning of what is next.

The accompanying musical sequence provides a soothing consistency to the artwork, like a recurrent musical phrase of a composition. The artist wrote: "In the background a centenarian musician provides a haunting chorus bridging our past, present and future [...] She remains constant, as does our relationship to our surrounding water [...] Water represents strength, essence, humility, futility, the eternal ebb and flow linking our inevitable conclusion to the traditions that are fading away."

*About the artist...* Frank E. Flowers (Writer/Director) graduated in Screenwriting from the University of Southern California. His award-winning short film, *SWALLOW* was an official selection at the 2003 Sundance Film Festival before being licensed by HBO. 2006 marked the theatrical release of his first feature film, *HAVEN*, filmed in the Cayman Islands with an ensemble cast including Orlando Bloom, Zoe Saldana, Anthony Mackie and Bill Paxton. Over the years Frank E. has also directed commercials, PSA's and music videos for noted artists such as Damian "Jr Gong" Marley, Ziggy Marley and the late Dwight "Heavy D" Myers. In 2011 he teamed with Zoe Saldana, scripting her directorial debut short film, *KAYLIEN*, starring Malin Ackerman and Bradley Cooper, and the following year directed several episodes of *THE ROPES*, an acclaimed digital series from creator Vin Diesel that debuted on Netflix. In 2013 he co-wrote *METRO MANILLA* with Oscar nominee Sean Ellis, which was nominated for a BAFTA after winning the World Cinema Audience Award at Sundance and went on to claim the British Writer's Guild Award for Best Screenplay in 2014.

Frank E. continues to develop several high-profile projects, including most recently a biopic on the early years of basketball superstar LeBron James for Universal Studios. This is his first exhibition at the National Gallery.

# Between Home and Time: II

JAMIE HAHN

2015

Archival inkjet prints

45 x 55, 1/ 8 edition



*"In two places of difference, what emerges in similarity is a pattern of movement. My view encompasses a great space between the present location – where I am in the moment – compared to the horizon of the distant landscape. I can see each equally but I cannot experience both simultaneously."*

Jamie Hahn

This work connects and contrasts the familiarity of two home places – Northeast Indiana and Eastern Washington, while reflecting on the artist's new home in the Cayman Islands. Questioning place and time is often a central theme in the quest for what identity means, but this unique work effectively highlights the indefinite, undefined and ever-changing nature of identity by making it analogous to the rhythm and intangibility of the sea.

*About the artist...* Jamie Hahn is an interdisciplinary artist working in video, artists' books and prints. By utilising the machine, the camera, she explores ideas of electronic meditations on time and place within a landscape. Her work is interconnected as each piece directs a sense of orientation through the use of repetition in time-based media.

She is interested in attempting to reveal the transformative effect of still and moving imagery as the viewer becomes an integral performative element – a fourth dimension that the artist seeks to embrace and convey.

Jamie Hahn received an MFA in Electronic Integrated Arts from Alfred University in 2010. Her work has been shown in screenings, group exhibitions and solo installations nationally and internationally: Squeaky Wheel Film and Media Arts Center in Buffalo, NY (2009), Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, China (2008, 2009, 2010), LOOP Video Arts Festival in Barcelona, Spain (2009, 2010), NYSCC at the Alfred University of New York, USA, Saranac Spokane in Washington, USA (2011), Rochester Contemporary Art Center in New York, USA (2012), Cité Internationale de Paris, France (2012) and Eastern Washington University Art Gallery, USA (2011, 2014).

# The Cayman History Show with Matt Brown

BEN HUDSON AND MATT BROWN

2014-15

Digital video, acrylic, plastic, metal and wood

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*The Cayman History Show* is a humorous documentary styled on the model of the trivia game show, in which the professor (played by Matt Brown) challenges the audience with multiple choice questions relating to Cayman history and cultural heritage. Topics range from commonplace trivia to significant historical events, figures and institutions in Caymanian history.

The humorous approach of the artists belies a more serious concern about the increasing disconnection between contemporary society and its heritage. By setting the production in various public venues – popular local entertainment spaces and via social media – the producers are able to bring historical knowledge to a wide audience of both Caymanians and expatriates, and may have created a platform where they connect.

*About the artist...* Ben J. Hudson, aka "Ben Hud", is a filmmaker who works with his cinematographer wife, Mari Abe. In 2008 the two teamed up with Cayman radio personality Matt Brown for several popular music and video projects on the island. *The Cayman History Show*, developed by Ben and Matt, has been a key part of their entertainment catalog published through SANDS Ltd. Ben and Mari Abe Hudson were presented with awards in 2012 for their leadership and outstanding contribution to the Cayman Islands Red Cross HIV and AIDS Awareness Education Programme.

In 2013 they were awarded the *Socially Conscious Filmmakers Award* for their work on the documentary film *Boy's Voice* by the Ministry of Education and Family Resource Center. Ben Hudson is currently in production on his original TV series entitled *Influenced*, a sci-fi drama scheduled for release in 2016 in Cayman.

Matt Brown strives to create engaging entertainment through theatre and music. His past and on-going projects include hosting the "*Kiss FM Morning Show*", presenting the Cayman Islands' national festival *Pirates Week*, acting in the annual comedy showcase *Rundown*, and developing his own Island-style pop music.





## Passage

GREG LIPTON

2015

Acrylic on canvas

55 x 30

In this self-portrait, the artist places himself at the centre of what appears to be a burst of kinetic energy. In fact it symbolises the rapid transformation – economic, social and cultural – which he believes is presently occurring in the Cayman Islands. He draws attention to the chaos, noise and insecurity generated by the speed of this change, and examines himself emerging from the past into a tumultuous present.

*About the artist...* Greg Lipton is a self-taught, Caymanian/Canadian artist who works in many genres. The artist has works on display in various galleries in the Cayman Islands and New York City and has been contracted by Acme Archives, the official licensees for Lucasfilm, Disney, Marvel, Dreamworks and Fox. His prints for Lucasfilm are currently available in galleries across North America and Europe.

## Untitled

ELENA MCDONOUGH

2015

Digital print

24 x 36

This self-portrait examines identity through notions of 'womanhood', femininity, and introspection. Having recently returned home from abroad, the artist places herself below the water to symbolize her reconnection to her Caymanian heritage, and yet the peculiar viewpoint of the subject near the surface, suggests a struggle to solidify a palpable identity in a world that is constantly shifting and changing. At the same time, the ethereal nature of the image evokes feelings of restful contentment and acceptance. The artist says that she sought to make an image that is "inconclusive, rippling and suggestive of a dichotomy between thought and action".

*About the artist...* Elena Mae McDonough is a British-Caymanian photojournalist and writer based in London, UK and Grand Cayman. Working with language, sculpture, analogue & digital photography, her style is richly textural, inherently collaborative and organically inspired.



# The Swan

PIPPA RIDLEY

2014

Collage and gouache on paper

48 x 36

On loan from Michael Ridley

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The manipulation of paint and collage of this work conjures up a colourful landscape resembling a fantastical stage, inspired by the artist's Caribbean childhood, in which a narrative seems to be played out. Underneath the bright shapes of foliage lurk dark themes of the absurd, which the artist says are imagery of alienation in contemporary society. "I want to suggest the complex, and sometimes unsavory realities [that are] incipient in social and economic developments [...] but also within our paradisiacal islands." The painting is a humorous caution about losing ourselves in the pursuit of pleasure and the dehumanising effect of dystopia.

The title is a reference to the Greek myth of 'Leda and the Swan', in which the god Zeus seduces Leda in the form of a swan – an event which leads to the Trojan War – but the work could equally suggest Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and their thirst for knowledge. The decisions made by the players of both stories have catastrophic consequences far beyond their immediate circumstances.

*About the artist...* Pippa Ridley was born in the Cayman Islands and pursued her secondary education in the UK after winning an art scholarship.

She studied Fine Art at the Slade School, UCL and at The Prince's Drawing School (now the Royal Drawing School). She has completed several international artist residency programmes including artist-in-residence at Kensington Palace, UK; the 'Moritz-Heyman' residency in Pignano, Tuscany, Italy; and most recently 'The London Summer Intensive' 2015, a residency affiliated with The Camden Arts Centre and The Slade, where the body of her work will be presented (as artist and co-curator) in October 2015 in the exhibition '*Signal Failure, The Agon of romance and Triumph*'. The artist is also a freelance tutor at The Royal Drawing School.

Pippa Ridley's work has been widely exhibited, from a solo show at Thomas Williams Gallery, London (2013) to group exhibitions such as: '*Master Drawings, Works on paper from 16th century to the present day*' and '*Colour/Figure, work from 1960 to the present day*', London (2014); 'A5' at Platform Projects @Art Athena, Greece; at the Quercus Gallery, Bath, UK (2013); '*Ivan Remembered*' at the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands (2014); and in several competition group exhibitions including the '*Jerwood Drawing Prize*', '*Threadneedle Art Prize*', '*Barbican Arts Group Open Exhibition*', (prizewinner), and the '*Royal Academy Summer Exhibition*'.

# Miracle

JUDY SINGH

2015

Digital film and mixed media

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This video is a personal ode to the artist's newborn child and a pondering of the histories and experiences the child will gather as he grows. Created from her perspective as a first-time mother the work also invites a reflection on the parent-child relationship and kinship at large; the blending of nationalities and identity resonating even more strongly for the artist as a Canadian/Caymanian (by marriage) mother of a new Caymanian child.

*About the artist...* A native of Toronto, Canada, Judy Singh received her BA in Radio & Television Arts at Ryerson University in 1998. After graduation, she developed her passion for documentary filmmaking in Madagascar, where she spent four months filming people living with disabilities. In the early 2000s, Judy Singh went on to produce for major Canadian television networks including CBC, Alliance-Atlantis and Vision TV.

Since moving to Cayman in 2005, Judy Singh has produced several bodies of work for news, events, education, corporate and commercial projects. Bringing with her more than 20 years of professional experience as a writer, producer, director, cinematographer and editor,

Judy Singh became a founding member of Cayman's film professionals group Friends of Film, which seeks to improve film and television production in the Cayman Islands. This is Judy Singh's first exhibit at the National Gallery.

# Made in Cayman; conversations 1, 2 & 3

NASARIA SUCKOO

2015

Mixed media

94 x 40 x 49



These bottles, found in various landfills in East End, are tangible reminders of past generations and the 'lost' history of slavery in our islands. As the artist states, it is impossible to contemplate the modern Caymanian experience without acknowledging those that came before and the enormous sacrifices they made.

This evocative installation might also be interpreted as a metaphorical representation of appearance versus essence in the inherent symbolism of containers and content. The viewer is invited to contemplate the qualities of each bottle and the identities, histories and states of mind that they suggest. How do these containers relate to each other? Are they empty or full? Transparent or opaque? Closed or open? Labeled or not labelled? The ultimate container is of course our own body and what it holds within

*“Any modern definition of Caymanian that does not acknowledge those who came before me; the ones who gave 300 years of free labour to cut the roads, to plant in rocks, to build the nets, to catch the fish, to feed the future; the ones who’s “make do” became rich heritage; any definition of Caymanian devoid of those lives sacrificed cannot exist in truth. And truth is where I am trying to live.”*

Nasaria Suckoo

*About the artist...* Nasaria Suckoo is a Caymanian artist, poet and performer. She received a BA in Theatre at New York University, USA, and later a Master in Educational Theatre. She is a member of the Caymanian artists' collective Native Sons, and has exhibited widely with the group and as a solo artist, at both local and international venues. Her writings have won the Cayman National Cultural Foundation's annual Cayfest Literary Competition for several consecutive years, and she has been invited to perform her pieces at various national and international events, including the London Olympics' Poetry Parnassus at the renowned South Bank Centre, UK (2012).

The artist has a distinctive style primarily derived from her fondness to combine acrylic paint with appliqué and traditional textiles. The subject matter of her work varies from political and cultural issues to religion. When asked about her work, the artist says that she hopes "...the viewer walks away with a strong reaction, whether it be positive or negative. Art that stirs nothing in a person is not art at all."

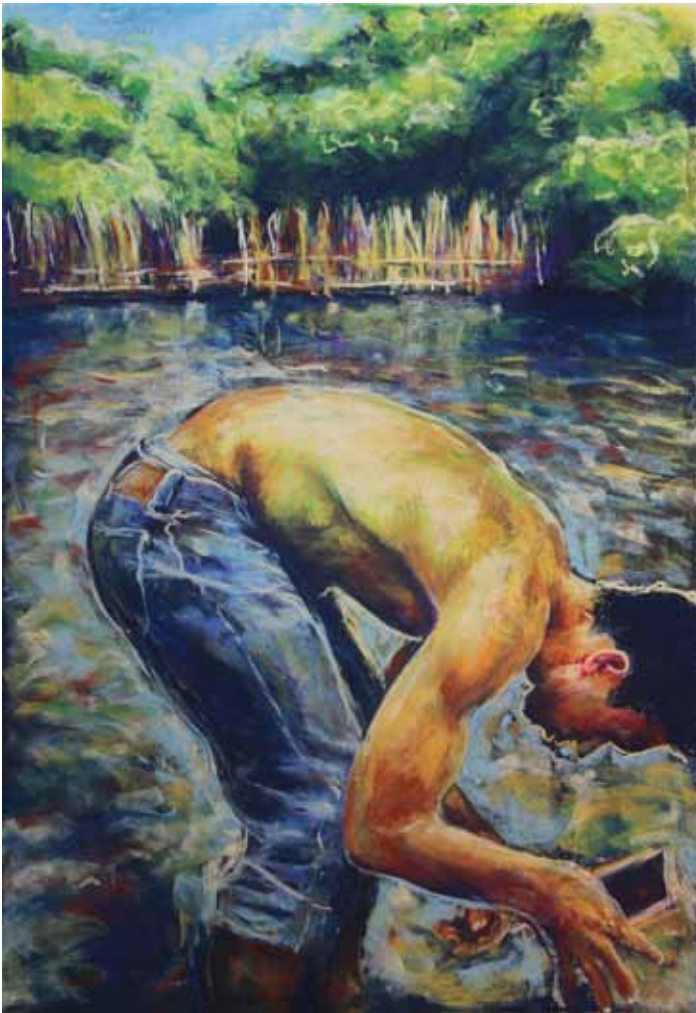
# Looking Glass

SIMON TATUM

2015

Ink and pastel on paper

28 x 20



*"How can a generation possibly understand their place  
[...]  
if they don't have a sense of  
what they have come from?"*

Simon Tatum

The Looking Glass of the title is used in both a literal sense – it is the traditional tool held by the fishermen to see under the water – and as a symbol for the seeking of self-knowledge, which is a recurring theme in the history of art. The artist has depicted himself as a traditional turtle fisherman in an effort to connect to the customs and history of his forefathers. "For the fisherman the looking glass offers a first look into the unknown, just as this piece is my first look into the unknown history of my people. It speaks upon the inevitable role of a young Caymanian trying to figure out what they cannot easily understand," he writes.

*About the artist...* Born in Cayman, Simon Tatum is currently pursuing his Bachelor's of Arts Degree at the University of Missouri, Columbia, for which he received a Cayman Islands Government Overseas Scholarship and a Deutsche Bank National Gallery Visual Arts Scholarship. His recent body of work, which explores Caymanian heritage, was the featured work of a three-man exhibition *Evoke* (Missouri, 2015). This is the first time his work has been exhibited at the National Gallery.

# Home to Parking Lot

GORDON SOLOMON

2015

Acrylic on canvas

31 x 38



This painting shows the location of the artist's former family home in George Town where his father lived for fifty years and where he and his siblings were raised. Now demolished and turned into a parking lot, it has become part of a sad, increasingly common, legacy of urban development.

The artist finds himself returning to this spot often, as if to find himself. The vibrancy of the colours poignantly contrast with the absence of life, while the elaborate convoluted composition reflects the density of the artist's feelings – and perhaps the complexity of determining one's identity.

*"Cayman has adopted a process of  
dispossession,  
where progress has triumphed  
[over] common sense"*

Gordon Solomon

*About the artist...* Artist and musician Gordon Solomon was born in Grand Cayman in the late 70s. Although he initially received some formal fine art training, the artist prefers to bring an intuitive approach to his work and has developed a distinctive style that draws on pointillism and cubism. His artwork is primarily concerned with capturing the serenity of his island home and imparting Caymanian heritage and culture with nostalgia and the idea of an 'authentic place'. The paintings he creates typically jolt and intrigue and are always an invitation to journey beyond the scene. Gordon Solomon has been honoured with the Cayman National Cultural Foundation's Artistic Endeavor Award (2002) and Silver Star Medal for Creativity in the Arts (2009). He was runner up in the Ogier Art Award in 2012. Gordon has exhibited widely in the Cayman Islands and the US, and his work can be found in public and private collections locally and abroad.

# Salty Kisses

ELINA ZAVALA

2015

Performance

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Performance art often seeks an intimate conversation with the spectator, so it is a fitting choice of expression for this artist who believes that we are all connected in "one cohesive story". Through sound, digital images and movement she prompts spectators to share a sense of heritage and commonality, like the bound chapter of a book, the woven threads of a tapestry or the interlocking components of a masterpiece.

*Salty Kisses*, which was created specifically for this exhibition, will be performed at the National Gallery's *t/Dal Shift - Late Night* on 16 October, 2015.

*About the artist...* Elina has worked as a performance artist, model, magician's assistant, dancer, and carnival player. She received her BFA in Theatre from Arizona State University, USA, and moved to New York City where she studied and performed in a variety of genres. These included performance art, Suzuki and Kabuki theatre, dance, traditional theatre and sound production. She also writes and performs her own work, which often incorporates multimedia, live music production and classical dance. She most recently studied Flamenco dance in Spain. She has lived in Cayman for two years.

*Photo credit: Kenroy Lumsden*



Butterfield



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